

**Brushy Creek Recreation Area
Trail Advisory Board Bi-annual Meeting
April 19, 2005**

At 4 p.m. park managers Chad Kelchen and Amber O'Neill gave a tour of area developments, including new roads for future cabins and the wind anemometer, which is the first step in placing a wind energy turbine at the park. Two proposed trail detours north of the north campground and north of Taxted's pond were discussed. Mike Tinkham, Myron Groat, Pat Reed, and Ruth Nellesen attended.

The regular meeting was called to order at 6:20 pm. Board members present were Ruth Nellesen, Mike Tinkham, Pat Reed, Myron Groat, Kristi Schaaf and Linda Jenny. Absent were Donna Christiansen and Robin Fortney. Also present were Steve Bell, Chad Kelchen, Amber O'Neill, and Kevin Szcodronski. The previous meetings minutes were looked over by the group and Mike Tinkham motioned to approve with a second by Linda Jenny.

Old Business

Chad updated the group on the all-weather trail plan. The project did receive the federal DOT recreational trail grant, which will result in getting the entire lake trail rock surfaced. It is a matching grant, however, and we have to come up with 20% of the project cost. There are a couple of areas of concern in regards to slope (as shown in tour) where the trail may have to be rerouted in order for it to hold up to use in wet conditions. Some board members felt a detour around the north campground would receive criticism because people like riding through the campground. The main lake trail project will not start until next April. However there is enough rock and fabric on site to begin the 3 mile loop around the prairie south of the north campground. Hopefully this can be completed this year. Brushy Creek also received trail grants/donations from the Iowa Horse Council, American Quarter Horse Association, and the North American Trail Riders Conference that will be used toward the all-weather trail project.

Chad also gave an update on cabin progress and the reservation system. The concrete slab is in place for one cabin and the electrical lines are complete, however there are still kinks being worked out as far as the cabin structure itself goes and there is no timeframe available for its arrival. There are also still many details to be decided on the reservation system to be implemented in 2006—more information available at www.exploreiowaparks.com that will be updated periodically as the plan develops.

New Business

Dodger cyclists have decided to “adopt-a-trail” from the north campground to the north boat ramp.

Overflow camping in the north day use area will not be allowed any longer once campgrounds at Brushy Creek are full. Staff is letting people know about this through press releases, newsletters, and on the park answering machine.

Ruth asked if camping was up this year. In 2003 camping was at 17,822 and in 2004 the camping total was 22,496. The 47 site non-equestrian campground was also added last year.

Myron questioned why it seems things are “up in the air” as far as developments at Brushy Creek. As bureau chief Kevin Szcodronski explained at the last meeting, Restore the Outdoors (RTO) funding was cut. This money was going to be used for improving sewer and water systems, and upgrading old electrical systems that are in disrepair in older parks. As a result, money from REAP has to be diverted to repair these systems. Construction projects at Brushy, such as the beach facility, new campground developments, and cabins will be put on hold indefinitely until either RTO money is restored or all the other higher priority projects are finished and there is REAP money once again available. The camper cabin project with the RC & D and Iowa Central Community College is a separate endeavor that is proceeding and the roads being put in for cabins come from separate funds made possible by the DOT.

Chad showed the group a new trail map done using GIS mapping tools. This will provide the public with a much more accurate map.

In the near future the brome grass fields on the east side of the main park road will be planted to native grasses and forbs.

Long-time camp host Tim Kruse passed away this winter, his wife Sharon will not be returning. We appreciate the great job they did for over 12 years in the north equestrian campground.

Free Camping Weekend is May 13,14,15.

Open discussion and comments

Parks Bureau Chief Kevin Szcodronski addressed the group to inform them of the DNR parks 20/20 initiative. In the year 2020 Iowa State Parks will celebrate its 100th anniversary. In the next 15 years it is the goal to have all state parks and recreation areas in premier condition as far as facilities, roads, trails, and equipment. A committee of influential people has been formed to help achieve this goal. Kevin was asked how the parks budget was doing and he responded that it was status quo. It is currently \$13 million but he is asking legislators to increase it to \$20 million.

Kevin also approached the group with the idea of making the trail advisory board appointment process less formal by eliminating the legislative appointments. In order to do this, however, the law needs to be changed. The TAB unanimously agreed that this was a good idea and voted in favor of drafting a new proposal to be reviewed at the next meeting. The current terms are 3 years and in the future the group suggested having staggered terms. The new system would involve a recommendation by the director and approval by the Natural Resources Commission.

A work day on the trail adopted by the Trail Advisory Board was set for April 30th from 9 a.m-1pm.

The next meeting will be October 18 with a group horseback ride at noon and the regular meeting at 6 pm. This meeting is open to the public.

Mike Tinkham made a motion to adjourn and it was seconded by Kristi Schaaf.